



Bellwether Magazine

Volume 1
Number 67 *Fall 2007*

Article 15

10-1-2007

Alumni Profile: Michael R. Moyer, V'90

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Michael R. Moyer, V'90: Saver of Homeless Pets

Michael R. Moyer, V'90, was drawn to the world of shelter animal medicine by a terrible paradox: The people who love animals are asked to kill them in the shelter community. "I was always intrigued by this situation and thought there must be some way to address it by engaging veterinarians in the life-saving work of sheltering and by educating and encouraging conscientious caring pet owners to adopt these animals," said Dr. Moyer.

As the first Rosenthal Director of Shelter Animal Medicine at the School, Dr. Moyer is, indeed, finding ways to save the lives of more homeless pets.

His interest in becoming a veterinarian began at age 14 when **John Wells, V'76**, persuaded **Gregory Godon, V'73**, to hire him as a "kennel boy" for their practice. In addition, Dr. Moyer grew up in a family that gave refuge to many stray cats and a home to dogs from the local humane shelter.

After graduating from Penn Vet, he joined fellow alumnus **Max Herman, V'59**, and his son, **Michael Herman, V'81**, in practice at Trooper Veterinary Hospital in Norristown, Pa.

Two years later, he entered the shelter animal medicine arena as executive director of the Chester County SPCA, which shelters 7,000 to 8,000 dogs and cats annually. When administrative duties took more of his time than hands-on care of animals, he was lured back to practice in 1994 and ultimately purchased Bridgewater Veterinary Hospital in Bensalem, Pa. He and his wife, Monica, also sponsor an Opportunity Scholarship to benefit a Penn Vet student who is interested in small animal practice.

An active volunteer for organizations that work to reduce the homeless pet overpopulation, Dr. Moyer has provided pro bono veterinary services to a greyhound adoption service, the Philadelphia Animal Care and Control Association (PACCA) and the New Jersey Alliance through his practice.

A past president of the Pennsylvania Veterinary Medical Association (PVMA),

he received the PVMA Veterinarian of the Year Award in 2005 in recognition of his leadership and collaborative efforts to address feral cat issues. He also established the association's Animal Welfare Committee. Dr. Moyer sits on the boards of directors of the American Animal Hospital Association, Alliance for Philadelphia's Animals and PACCA, and is a member of the Association of Shelter Veterinarians. He also is set to assume the presidency of the Veterinary Medical Alumni Society this fall.

In 2005, Dr. Moyer was asked to join Penn Vet's exploratory committee for the Shelter Animal Medicine program and, in 2006, was named as its first director. "It's been a remarkable opportunity to return to the University as an instructor, to roll out a new program and begin educating veterinary students about the field," said Dr. Moyer. "It's a real joy to provide oversight for surgical and primary care training, and it's very rewarding to see students have their first opportunity to put their hands on a case and make decisions about it. I hope to see our students start pursuing careers in shelter animal medicine." ■



Dr. Moyer and a student examine a PAWS puppy. Photo by John Donges.